

# NATIONAL COASTWATCH INSTITUTION

Issue 9 Winter 2007

**FRIENDS OF STEPPER POINT**

## **STEPPER POINT NEWS**

Patrons ; Peter Prideaux-Brune.

Rick Stein OBE.

### **STEPPER POINT ACHIEVES DFS.**

**ON THE 9TH NOVEMBER, 2006  
THE STATION WAS ASSESSED BY THE D.F.S  
EXAMINERS & H M COASTGUARD.  
AS A RESULT THE STATION HAS BEEN AWARDED  
DECLARED FACILITY STATUS.**



## **DFS at Stepper Point**

*“A special thank you to the members for the DFS team together with  
Mr David Searle HM Coastguard Falmouth.*

*Many thanks to the team who took us through. They are in alphabetical order:*

*John Battersby, John Cockburn, Brian French, David Glover, Derek Lindsey, Peter Thorpe, George Turpin and Richard Wilson”.*

The day started with the examiners and a Coastguard Officer arriving and checking the lookout paper work and the running of the station by the Station Manager.

Followed by a check on our working knowledge, we divided into teams that represented the station. This consisted of the setting up of simulated casualty situations. We worked with a vessel at distance, in an assumed casualty situation. The watch keepers were asked to spot, plot and report on this situation. This was done very efficiently by all members of the teams.

Bearings and radar marks were used, and the simulated causality charted and reported to the relevant authority. Each team was questioned on the roll of the watch keeper, the roll of the NCI and their knowledge of the local area, tides, plus other members of the rescue teams at the disposal of H M Coastguard.

Following the ‘wash-up’, we were notified we had passed.

What does this mean to Stepper Point. “Declared Facility Status” is a required working mandate laid down between HM Coastguard and NCI. It means that we have declared to the Coastguard that we are competent in all aspects of assisting the CG. We are now classed as members of the recognised Emergency teams.

Well done to all who took part.

Derek Lindsey, Station Manager.

### **New Blinds for the lookout.**

All too often one could look westward and notice a group of sailing yachts happily coming towards the lookout, but a few moments later, they had vanished. This also came to our notice many years ago when Stepper Point belonged to the Coastguard when night watches were carried out. These small yachts were then lights of red and white. They were not boats but reflections from the houses at Greenaway rocks and Trebetherick point.

To get over this problem, we have installed new anti glare blinds to the windows. This now gives us a clear view to the west.

The money for these blinds was raised by a marathon swim from Rock Beach to Padstow Sea Cadet Unit . This was completed by our youngest member Miss Larissa Porter, who at the time was 11 years of age. Well done Larissa and thank you. The work to have these blinds installed has now been completed by Capt Sid Porter and Derek Lindsey Station Manager.

### **A bad start at Stepper Point for the New Year**

We hope you all had a Happy New Year. Whilst some of us were welcoming the in the New Year, Stepper Point , suffered an unusual round of severe gales from the west. These developed into a storm on New Years Day, causing more damage to the lookout.

The turbine which supplies most of the power to run the lookout, was blown from the top of the mast and crashed to the concrete path below. It ended up in several un-repairable pieces, the blades have not yet been found. At the time of this happening it is believed the wind was blowing in excess of a storm force 10. The unit has been sent back to the suppliers and is being checked to see if this could have been caused by a design fault, which I believe to be the case, lets hope I am right!.

A new turbine has been ordered through Marine Electronics of Fowey who carry out all the work on electrical units within the lookout. It is hoped the new turbine will be up and running by late January.

That the same day the lookout was kept busy monitoring Falmouth Coastguard, the Padstow Lifeboat and the St Merryn Cliff rescue teams, who were carrying out a search for a missing holiday maker from Trevone Bay. Luckily for us we were not involved to the extent of using our radar (power conservation).

Whilst we have this problem the Station Manager and Deputy Vic Prees, are working hard to keep the batteries charged and ready for use if required.



Above are two pictures of our largest visitor off the lookout, **H.M.S. Cornwall** taken last year. She was doing courtesy visits around the coast. Just off Padstow she met up with the New Padstow lifeboat "The Spirit Of Padstow". These pictures of HMS Cornwall were supplied by Mrs Hilda Barnes, one of our great band of fundraisers and helpers. She went out on the local pleasure boat Jubilee Queen to take them for our next Issue. Many thanks Hilda.



The picture **H.M.S. Cornwall** was taken by the **Station Manager** distance it shows just how small the just makes you think how brave the weathers even to ships much bigger



**The "Spirit of Padstow"** from the look out. From this lifeboat is in comparison. It crew are, to go out in all than H..M..S. Cornwall.

## ACCIDENTS WILL HAPPEN

We know all too well, that accidents happen. This was the sad case when our patron, Mr Peter Prideaux - Brune went out fishing in a rib with his Brother-in-law Mr.Tim Parr, one of our members at Stepper Point. Whilst out, the rib, powered by two large outboard motors, hit a rather rough sea causing Mr Peter Prideaux-Brune to loose his balance resulting in his injuring his back. He spent quite a long time in Derriford Hospital, Plymouth. We are pleased to inform you, he is now home convalescing, and I am sure, not thinking of fishing for a while!. Everyone at the station send their good wishes, Peter, and hope you get well soon.

\*\*\*\*

On a sad note, the lookout spent most of New Years day providing a visual watch and reporting on the tragic events that happened at Trevone Bay. A 24 year old male dressed in shorts and a T shirt together with some of his friends went to look at the large wave breaking on the Madrips.It appears the person got too close and was washed into the sea.

The Coastguard were alerted, they in turn called out:

- The Padstow Lifeboat,
- The St Merryn Auxiliary Coastguard Cliff Rescue Team,
- A helicopter from Culdrose,
- Also in attendance was the police helicopter from Exeter.

A full search was made, until dusk forced them to end the search. This was continued the next day. I listened to most of the operation and I must say how professional all those involved were. The way the search was handled by the coastguard, and how all members of the rescue services deployed their members.

We were lucky as one of our members from Stepper Point lives at Trevone (Peter Thorpe). He was able to watch, film and monitor all that went on. We hope to be able to use part of the rescue as an aid to our training.

I would like to thank the Commanding Officer Mrs. Helen Truscott, from TSC St. Petroc Sea Cadet Corps., plus the members of the committee for allowing us to use their premises for our training sessions. We will soon be able to involve the cadets in our training sessions, and maybe one day they will become the future watch keepers of Stepper Point. Since we achieved DFS, we are getting up to operational standards as laid down by NCI and Coastguard. We have now purchased eight radio sets, (not Marine band) a lot more charts and tools to use with them. We are now looking into a purchasing a laptop computer with a projecting facility which will assist our radio and radar tutor Mr Richard Wilson and Mr Dave Smith who is our training Officer, in setting up training courses in all other topics. I am sure they will find these a great help.

## WHILST ON HOLIDAY OR WHEN VISITING PADSTOW WHY NOT VISIT THE ESTABLISHMENTS RUN BY OUR PATRONS?!

A walk in the grounds of Prideaux Place followed by a guided tour, and to finish up with a Cornish Cream Tea. This is a must!! - I was lucky to have been invited to do both and enjoyed every minute!

A DINNER, A MEAL OR JUST PLAIN FISH AND CHIPS. These are second to none, I have tried the fish and chips and they are the best I have tasted anywhere!!

**Visit our Patron**  
**At the beautiful 16th Century**  
**Elizabethan Mansion of**  
**Prideaux Place, Padstow.**  
**Telephone 01841-532411**

**Visit our Patron**  
**The Padstow Seafood**  
**Restaurant**  
**Telephone 01841-532700**  
**e-mail- reservations@rickstein.com**

# PADSTOW FARM SHOP

**All our produce is Cornish and locally sourced.**

- ❑ Our own beef and lamb raised happily on our three farms in Padstow - Tregirls, Trethillick and Lellizzick
- ❑ Cornish chicken, duck, guinea fowl, pork, bacon & sausages.
- ❑ Free range eggs
- ❑ Locally grown seasonal vegetables.
- ❑ Salad, herbs & select vegetables freshly picked from our Victorian Walled Garden in Padstow - loyal suppliers to Rick Stein & Ripley's for many years!
- ❑ A selection of local Cornish cheeses (including the famous Cornish Yarg)
- ❑ Cornish smoked goods
- ❑ Bakery goods and Cornish pasties
- ❑ Cornish preserves - jams, chutneys & honey
- ❑ Cold drinks & ice creams
- ❑ Cornish beauty products from the Trevarno Estate
- ❑ A selection of Cornish gifts, including St Eval candles.

**For more information telephone 01841 533060 or  
visit our website: [www.padstowfarmfoods.biz](http://www.padstowfarmfoods.biz)  
See reverse for directions...**

**Whilst visiting Padstow why not treat yourselves at The Padstow Farm Shop**

For all your locally bred meat and local cooked food.

From Padstow take the Newquay coast road for 1 mile turn right to Crugmere and Hawkers Cove and NCI Stepper Point,  
1/4 mile down the lane.

PADSTOW FARM SHOP  
Trethillick Farm, Padstow Cornwall PL28 8HJ

## **BOOKS FOR YOU TO READ.**

The NCI are lucky to have two talented writers among their volunteers.

**Brian French** of St. Merryn, is a watch keeper here at Stepper Point, his main interest is the history of Padstow from the sea faring point of view. His book entitled:

### **“WRECKS OF THE DOOM BAR 1650-1994”**

This is a comprehensive listing of shipwrecks and ship movements to and from the Port of Padstow.

Dates when most of the ships were built, the cargos which they carried and the date of the sad ending of most of them.

This book is available from all good book shops including The Strand Book Shop Padstow.

### **“FISHING BOATS AND PORTS OF CORNWALL.”**

Here is another fine book this time by **Stewart Lenton** of Rame Head NCI.

I speak on behalf of some of our members from Stepper Point. and hear on the grapevine, that stations in the NCI region have found this book an invaluable aid to boat recognition.

The need for this book was recognised by Rame Head when passing vessels would call up the Coastguards and give their name and positions. This was all very well for the coastguard to plot a position, but NCI watchkeepers needed visual information hence the book was conceived. Information was needed with a full description of the vessels which included their names, colours, name of owners, ports of registration and which port they operate from

This could only be accomplished by the method taken by Stewart Lenton.

I would recommend that anyone in the South West with an interest in the sea and local boats, has one at their disposal.

This book can be obtained from The Strand Book Shop Padstow or any good bookshop.

## **FROM A NEW MEMBER, Mrs Margot Westmacott.**

Having visited North Cornwall on many occasions, I got to hear about the excellent work carried out by the National Coastwatch Institution. On further visits I found the NCI had a look out at Stepper Point.

Knowing from experience the extreme conditions at Stepper, I walked out and joined "The Friends of Stepper.". I was given a magazine which I read with great interest, and decided 'Yes' this is for me, as I would love to be able to help an organisation that supports the Emergency Services.

As I said, from my experience ,let me tell you a story which happened several years ago.

I lived in several places around this area from Trevone to Port Isaac, and spent most of the time walking these beautiful cliff walks. this was back in 1940.

My main story started one day in 1930. Having walked the area and admired the sea views, it was our wish to set out for a days boating. We borrowed a dinghy from a fisherman in Padstow and set off with my father, his twin brother, a couple of others and of course our beloved gramophone. The boat began taking in water just below Stepper Point on I believe the dreaded Doom Bar.

Luckily for us we were spotted from Stepper Point, and the Padstow lifeboat was called to assist us. I remember seeing the lifeboat coming towards us, but we were now in the water. The boat sank, as did our gramophone. We were taken aboard and brought back to Padstow harbour by the lifeboat and crew, whom I have ever since supported.

\*\*\*\*\*

*I would like to thank this new member for contributing to our magazine and to ask for more of you to do the same. Please feel free to drop me an e-mail or letter and I will do my best to get you involved.*

### **Treasurers Report.**

Here we are embarking on another year of fundraising for the station, which will comprise some coffee mornings, a BBQ and other small events to be announced later.

I must thank those supporters who gave so much time during 2006 doing all those things that made our coffee events so successful.

As treasurer I would also like to convey on behalf of "Friends of Stepper" our appreciation to all those who have subscribed so generously to our support fund.

As you will appreciate the annual costs of running a station like Stepper can be a little daunting. For instance, the telephone bill is in excess of £400 as we are unable to access a standard BT line we have to depend on mobile phone technology.

Other major expenses come in the form of licences, insurances, capitation fees, heating fuels, weatherproof clothing, plus ongoing maintenance of station communication equipment and the fabric of the building, an overall cost of some £4,500.

I would like to mention in passing that my address as Treasurer has recently changed as follows :

12 Rainyfields Close Padstow PL28 8RF. The contact telephone and E-mail remain the same.

\*\*\*\*\*

## **PADSTOW ART GROUP WILL BE HOLDING THEIR ANNUAL EXHIBITIONS.**

In the Memorial Hall Padstow

**On May 27th to June 2nd—August 19th to 1st September.**

Come along a view some great works of art!

## STEPPER POINT NEWS AND FILM SHOWS.

The Station Manager, Mr Derek Lindsey, is please to announce that his late father Bill Lindsey's collection of slides on ship wrecks, and old Cornish views, are available for any organisation.

I do not make a charge for this, but we do try and get members to join our crew of watch keepers and fundraisers or make a donation towards the running cost of the station.

Please book early to avoid disappointment, these shows are very popular!

## 2007 FUNDRAISING.

During this year we will be fundraising with the **Padstow Lifeboat** at their fun days.

There will be **two collection days** at **Sainsbury's Truro**.

**Coffee mornings** will continue in the Spring at the Padstow Institute dates to be announced. These will be run with the assistance of our team of fundraising supporters to whom we are indebted .

A **B-B-Q and fun night** will be held in July at the **Well Parc Hotel, Trevone Bay**.

It is hoped that we will have a stand for three days at the Royal Cornwall Show in early June, watch the press.

## CHANGES AT THE STATION

A new display show case has been purchased and will be erected on the western wall of the lookout. This will give news and up dates of happenings and events around the coast.

Next to this board, will be another board denoting the RSPB programme for Stepper Point and the Stepper Point conservation group. Going back to page 5 of this issue, you will read about the new Padstow Farm Shop being owned and run by Mr and Mrs Charlie Watson Smyth. From this new RSPB notice board you will find out how the farm shop and conservation runs hand in hand.

It is hoped that a new breeding programme will be introduced at Stepper Point which could include the Puffin and the Cornish Chough, two birds I would love to see back in our area. A record from our log, July 06, by Sarah Thorneycroft, a puffin was sighted feeding below the lookout. Lets hope this programme will bring more excitement to our coast and cliffs.

## BIRD AND WILD LIFE RECOGNITION AT STEPPER POINT.

Mrs Jennifer Rawe, our 1st lady, is still visiting and taking records for the RSPB. I would like to thank her for her continued support at the lookout, and for keeping our records up to date.

Within the last few days a Gyr Falcon has been sighted near the lookout by one of our members

During 2006 there were sightings of whales, dolphins, harbour porpoises, sharks and sunfish, numerous sea birds, and of course our puffins.

On headland we have been very busy reporting the bird and animal life, ranging from a white stoat to a squirrel! All this of course is spin off from our main watch keeping roll.

## THE DEFENCES OF PADSTOW SINCE 1588.

This account of the historic defences of Padstow was given to me by one of our members **Mr. Tim Parr**; Padstow has been an important port, and a centre of Religion for more that 2,000 years. During this time it has been defended against threats from five different enemies'. Only one, the Vikings succeeded in destroying the town, and monastery in 981A.D. In the second world war, the Germans did cause some damage, with there indiscriminate bombings.

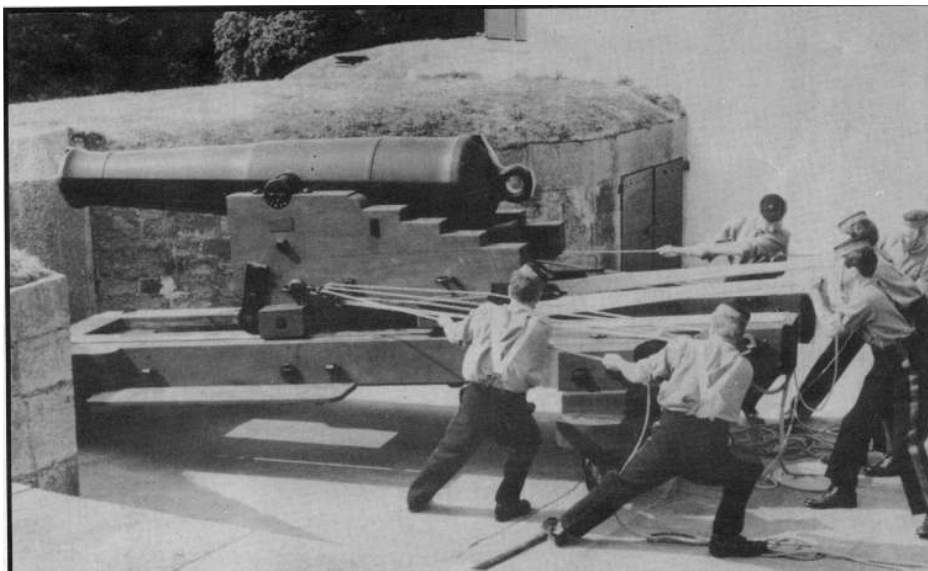
In the sixteenth century the enemy were the Spanish who attempted to land at Harlyn Bay in 1595, but who were repulsed with casualties, after a fire fight, with the trained bands of local Militia. Threats were also posed by the Americans during their war of independence, and the French during the Napoleonic period, but no attacks were launched. Whilst we have not found any records of the defences against the Norsemen it would probably have been around the "Old town" The first evidence of defences is to be found on the well known "Pines Map", which shows Padstow was defended by a gun, one battalion of Pikemen one battalion of musketeers, and earth works on both sides of the estuary.

A map dated 1695 shows a gun positioned at Long Rock this appears to be the same position as shown on the Pines Map. and conforms with the recommendation of an English "Handbook for the sitting of guns for the defence of Ports". An expert on guns who visited the site, considers that with the Henrican gun, now at Prideaux Place could well have held a Navy at bay, the narrow channel would have forced the enemy to pass within 150 metres of the gun. This gun is the earliest known cast iron gun in the UK and was cast for Henry VIII probably before 1540.

The next era, in which we have evidence of the defence of Padstow, appears to be the war of American Independence, when the American privateers, such as John Paul Jones, were attacking our merchant shipping, around our shores, the merchants of Bristol appealed to the government for help.

During the second world war a gun emplacement at Gun Point had a six pounder manned by the home guard, and another four inch Naval gun mounted just south of Padstow Harbour covering the town bar. In May 1942 these guns were dismantled and returned to the Navy to help fight the battle of the Atlantic They were replaced by 138mm guns off a French warship. The gun emplacement is still there today all but covered over. Next to Stepper Point lookout is an world war Pillbox built in 1940 to provide shelter for shell and fuel store.

The wars may be over but the lookout we command is still there, and a daily watch over the entrance to Padstow goes on, only today we are looking movements of



on, only today we are looking out for shipping a different kind!

## ROLL OF HONOUR

The following is a list of the benefactors who have helped us to resurrect Stepper Point Watch Station to the modern station it is today, without their help we would have been 'All at Sea'

### Our sincere thanks to all!

Quinnin Trust	Padstow Town Council
The Pirate Trust	Measures Trust
The Bevin Family	TJP International
The Kids Obby Oss	Rock Sailing Club
Wadebridge Sailing Club	GT Ships Aberdeen
J Bealing Construction	Rock Sailing Club
Dave Rodda Windows	Western Flat Roofing
Wadebridge Boating Club	RAOB Padstow
Carlton TV	Padstow Shipyard
Heathcoat Amory Trust	Truro Tractors
Larissa Porter	Rosemary Weekes
Merry Makers	Fortis Group
Bodmin Lions	RAOB St Merryn
PVH Computers	Launceston WI
Padstow Darkies	RAOB Greystone Border Lodge
St Minver Senior Circle	Padstow Harbour Commissioners
St Issey WI	Wadebridge WI
Grandchildren of Langton Hart	Padstow Heating Services
Padstow Old Peoples Club	Mrs Betty Shaw
Awards for All	Our Loyal helpers

Also our many subscribing Members of Friends of Stepper

### Friends of Stepper Point

If you have enjoyed reading this edition of our newsletter, please feel free to pass it on to a friend, whom you think could be interested in supporting us.

You may wish to visit our web site at [www.stepper-point.co.uk](http://www.stepper-point.co.uk) where you will find regular updates of newsworthy items and information about our worthwhile project.

Membership forms for the Friends of Stepper can be printed from our web site., or feel free to photocopy the last page of this newsletter. Standing Order forms can be requested from the Treasurer.

By signing the gift aid declaration on page 12 of this newsletter it will enable us to claim an extra 28.2p on every £ of any donation you have made since 2002

#### **Stepper Point Contact numbers.**

Lookout telephone No	07810898041	
Station Manager Derek Lindsey	01841-540505.	e-mail <a href="mailto:derek@oilpaintingl.wanadoo.co.uk">derek@oilpaintingl.wanadoo.co.uk</a>
Treasurer George Barnes	01841-532620	e-mail <a href="mailto:nci@chynoweth.co.uk">nci@chynoweth.co.uk</a>
Secretary Sarah Thorneycroft	01841-541020	
Membership Secretary Peter Barrett.	01208-841342	

#### **Deputy/Emergency call out numbers**

George Barnes	01841 532620.	Vic Prees	01841 540470
Sid Porter	01841 532067	Colin Davey	01841533047



**Service upgrades software/hardware needs or if you just want a new system we will be glad to help.**

**Give us a call, our service is first rate we are here to help 7 days a week.**

**So if your computer is unwell give us a bell**

**Local service= local rates**

**Call Jamie on 01841 532380      01841 533088      07989435826**

**[Pvh.com@virgin.net](mailto:Pvh.com@virgin.net)**

**THE OLD CUSTOM HOUSE AND PESCADOU RESTAURANT**

South Quay, Padstow. Cornwall.

Tele; 01841532 359.

Enjoy a quiet drink and meal overlooking the tranquil harbour.

Accommodation available.

## Friends of Stepper Point - Application Form 2007

I/we would like to join the Friends of Stepper Point.

Name (s): \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose \_\_\_\_\_ annual subscription (s) of £15.00 (Adults)

and/or \_\_\_\_\_ annual subscription (s) of £10.00 (Under 16's)

(Cheques payable to 'NCI Stepper Point') to:-

Hon Treasurer Mr George Barnes 12 Rainyfields Close, Padstow, Cornwall PL28 8RF

Subscribers will receive our newsletter on a regular basis

I would like my updates by post

I would like a receipt from NCI Stepper Point.

I would like to make an additional donation of £\_\_\_\_\_

If you would like to donate regularly by Standing Order, please contact our treasurer who will arrange this with you.

You may cancel your Standing Order at any time without penalty by notifying the Hon Treasurer and your Bank in writing.

If you would like your donation to go towards a specific item of equipment, please tick the box below to receive a list of needed equipment.

I would like to receive a list of needed equipment.

**Notes:**

Gift Aid

I certify I am a taxpayer in the UK and wish my contribution to be claimed in accordance with the rules applying to gift aid to charities. I will notify the charity treasurer if my tax liabilities change.

Signature ..... Dated .....